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STATE FOR IO/S (H.WARD) AND EUR/CE (Y.SAINT-ANDRE)

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON UNITED NATIONS HARMONIZATION OF
CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

REF: SECSTATE 129988

¶1. (U) On December 11, poloff delivered the message in reftel to Frank Gruetter, Deputy Head of UN Coordination at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA), and to Doris Frick, DCM at the Embassy of the Principality of Liechtenstein in Bern. Neither Gruetter nor Frick had any immediate substantive feedback regarding the U.S. proposal.

¶2. (SBU) On December 15, Gruetter expressed the Swiss government's general appreciation for the USG's "constructive efforts to stimulate discussion" of these issues. He reported that the GOS "shares the view" that it appears premature to push for the quick adoption of the Special Operations Approach (SOA) used by the UN Funds and Programs. Gruetter added, however, that the GOS believes that the UN Secretary General's proposals for streamlining contractual arrangements, his proposed designation of family/non-family duty stations, and the introduction of paid rest and recuperation travel would "go a long way in improving the Secretariat's HR system and boosting staff morale."

¶3. (SBU) Regarding the USG's proposal, Gruetter conveyed that the GOS sees merit in the thrust of many of the ideas that the USG has put forward, but fears that some of the ideas might be difficult to integrate into "a system that has been carefully crafted and balanced to address the interests and needs of all stakeholders." He mentioned in particular that the GOS supports the "strategic objective, inherent in some of the U.S. proposals," to improve the promotion prospects of UN staff and to enhance their professional growth opportunities. Gruetter noted that the Swiss delegation in New York would be "happy to support resolution language which helps to realize this objective."

CARTER